



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 30 July 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
30 JULY 1968

1. Czechoslovakia -
Soviet Union

There has been no change in the situation overnight. The confrontation at the border yesterday went on well into the night and was scheduled to resume at about 4:00 AM Washington time this morning. Neither side is putting out interim communiqués or announcements.

2. Laos

Ambassador Sullivan reports that he spent the weekend attending a royal Laotian wedding in Luang Prabang. The atmosphere "brimmed with Pollyannish hope" from most of the Lao and many of the diplomats. The reason for this unwonted optimism was the dramatic return (after four years) of the North Vietnamese ambassador bearing gifts from Ho Chi Minh. With him came the Pathet Lao representative, also bearing gifts.

The North Vietnamese was "very cagey" about his intentions. A number of people expect him to return quickly to Hanoi, but he told Sullivan that he will remain "for some time."

In any case, this conspicuous gesture flattered the King considerably. Ambassador Sullivan comments that if in fact the North Vietnamese does stay, this could be the beginning of a long-anticipated "peace offensive" in Laos.

3. Southern Yemen

Disturbances in upcountry areas are spreading, and there are signs that the army may be splitting up along tribal lines. This would seriously impair the army's effectiveness and could open the door to widespread tribal anarchy.

4. South Vietnam

Intelligence from all sources continues to suggest that another country-wide enemy offensive is not imminent but may be planned for the second or third week in August. The Communists are capable of mounting multiregimental attacks at any time in several areas--across the Demilitarized Zone, central I Corps, central highlands, and northwestern III Corps--but the information at hand indicates that enemy preparations for attacks against Saigon and key objectives in I Corps are not yet in the final stages.

5. India

Prime Minister Gandhi has emerged relatively unscathed from the critical parliamentary debate over Indo-Soviet relations. In meeting the domestic uproar over the Soviet decision to sell arms to Pakistan, Mrs. Gandhi blunted what could have been a heavily damaging issue to her.

Extensive consultations before Parliament opened and full public backing from her most dangerous rivals within the Congress Party limited the effectiveness of the opposition attack. But it was her refusal to entertain even a mild opposition resolution condemning the Soviets that forced the opposition's hand. The opposition resorted to a motion implying censure, which helped to unite support behind her.

6. North Korea

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes

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**Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only**

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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Le Duc Tho to Return to Paris: The North Vietnamese ambassador in Vientiane told Ambassador Sullivan over the weekend that he had talked with Le Duc Tho in Hanoi and that he expected Tho to go back to Paris in the "next week or two."

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Hanoi and the Czech Situation: Hanoi media have not discussed or reported on the Czech situation [REDACTED]

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Hanoi's sympathies probably are with the Czechs, but the North Vietnamese also are concerned that the situation in Eastern Europe may weaken their own position in the war. A domestic broadcast on 28 July carries a nine-day-old Soviet press item accusing the US of "dark schemes" in Eastern Europe to undermine the capabilities of the Communist countries. The Hanoi account does not discuss Czechoslovakia but merely reports that the Soviet article called on Communist countries to strengthen their unity and to be ready to counter any "aggressive action against socialist positions."

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Hanoi on US Elections: North Vietnamese propaganda during the past month contained no reference at all to the US election campaign and no mention of any of the candidates as such. [REDACTED]

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Hanoi's lack of propaganda coverage of the US election campaign indicates both serious interest in the subject and uncertainty about how to interpret the events thus far. There are many instances of Communists probing Westerners for interpretations of the campaign.

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